



## It's a pair of (t)wins at ESTTA finals!

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Twins Connor and Anna Green wrote a little piece of history when they won their respective Under-11 titles at the Butterfly ESTTA Individual Finals.

The Nottingham duo claimed victory in their finals within minutes of each other to create one of the highlights of the 51 years of the event.

There were also titles for brothers Benjamin and Joseph Hee in the Under-13 and Under-16 Boys' events.

More than 300 players from 50 counties competed at Aldersley Leisure Village in Wolverhampton, in boys' and girls' events at Under-11, Under-13, Under-16 and Under-19 categories.

The event was the last for ESTTA Chairman John Blackband before he steps down after 28 years in the role.

## Under-11 Boys



Connor Green and the rest of the medallists with England National Coach Alan Cooke (picture by Ted Cottrell)

Connor Green was the first of the twins to claim the title, beating Toby Ellis 3-2 (11-1, 7-11, 11-1, 3-11, 11-7) in the final.

It was the proverbial rollercoaster and the winner explained: "In some games, all the balls were going on for me and in some they were all going on for him, but I managed to have a good game at the end."

The 10-year-old from Nottingham added: "I felt like all the pressure was on me because I had beaten him before and I was higher ranked.

"Getting to the fifth set is always nerve-wracking but I had hope that I would win it."

He said ensuring he matched his twin sister did not give him any extra motivation, adding: "As long as I win, I'm not too fussed but it's nice for both of us to win."

The bronze medallists were Adam Szabo, beaten 3-0 (11-9, 12-10, 11-5) by Ellis, and Oliver Maric-Murray, who was defeated 3-1 (11-7, 11-5, 8-11, 12-10).

Szabo had a remarkable match in the first knockout round, defeating Joseph Cooper 3-2 (14-16, 11-0, 10-12, 11-4, 11-4).

## Under-11 Girls





Alan Cooke presents the Under-11 Girls' awards (picture by Ted Cottrell)

Minutes after her twin brother had won, Anna Green completed the family double with a 3-1 (11-8, 11-5, 13-15, 11-5) victory over Katie Bates of Cleveland.

She saw her opponent save four match points en route to taking the third, but there was no repeat in the fourth game as Green sewed it up.

Bates, who beat top seed Megan Jones in the quarter-finals, had a thrilling semi-final against Saskia Key, eventually prevailing 3-2 (9-11, 11-8, 11-2, 16-18, 11-9).

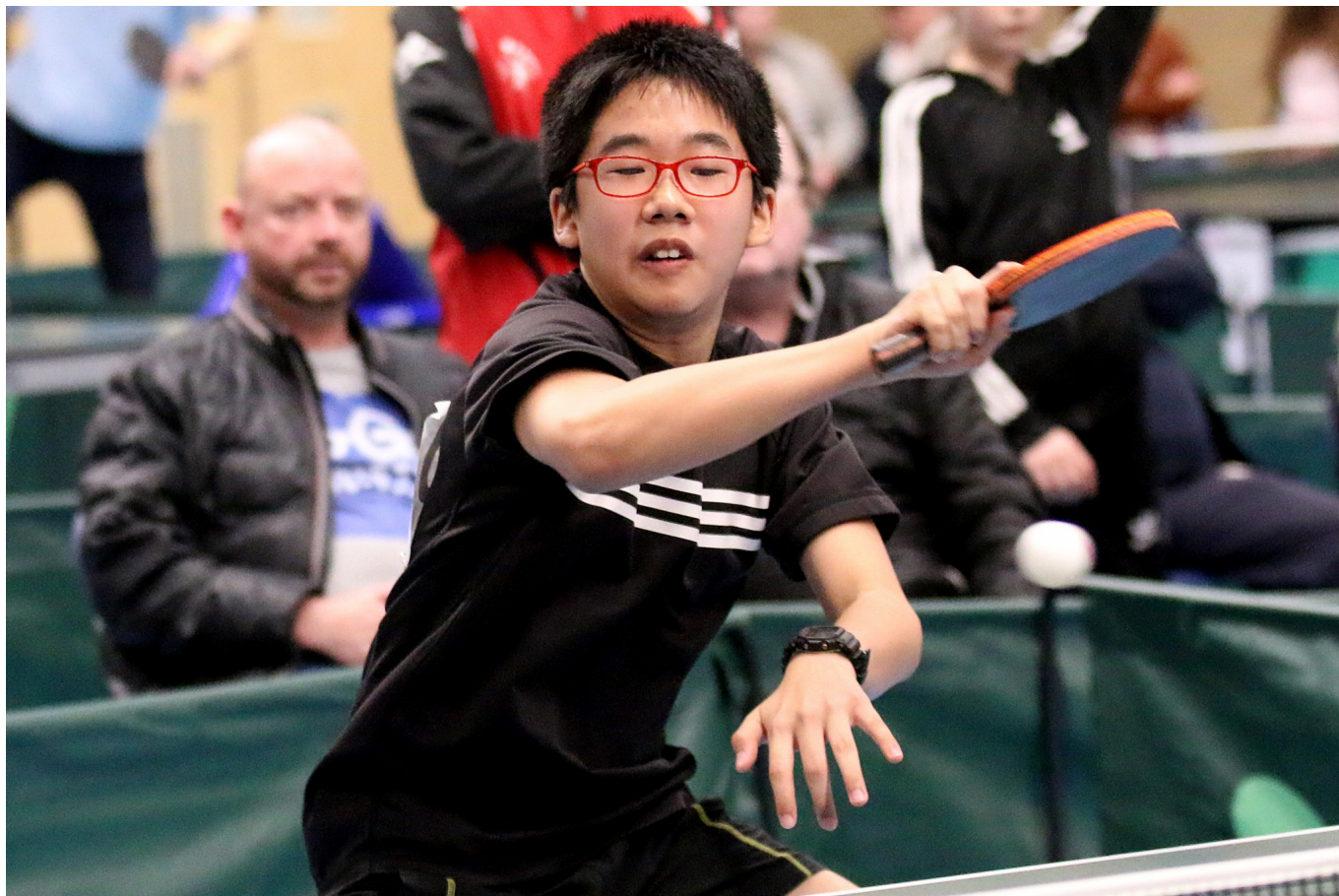
Green's last-four clash was a more routine 3-0 (11-7, 11-6, 12-10) scoreline against Sophie Barcsai.

The winner said: "When I missed the match points in the final I was thinking just keep on doing what I was doing and I didn't want to let it affect me. I kept telling myself 'I've got this far and I can still do it'.

"A lot of the matches, especially in the knockout stages, were quite difficult."

In common with her brother, she said she was not driven by matching his results, adding: "I didn't know he'd won it at that point, I just wanted to win myself."

## Under-13 Boys



U13 champion Benjamin Hee (picture by Ted Cottrell)

The U13 boys proved to be the most unpredictable category of the day as three players from outside the top eight seeds reached the semi-finals and the fourth semi-finalist was a reserve player only called up on the eve of the event.

That player was Callum McRae of Durham, who took the place of injured third seed Thomas Rayner, and he went on to reach the final.

His opponent was City of London School pupil Benjamin Hee and he proved to be a step too far for McRae, Hee winning it 3-0 (11-2, 11-8, 11-5).

12-year-old Hee, whose family moved to Ealing from Singapore last year, said: "I'm excited and very happy, it's the biggest event I've won since I've been here. It was very hard, there were some really good opponents."





The Under-13 podium (picture by Ted Cottrell)

The semi-finals saw McRae fight back from 2-1 down to beat Bertie Kelly 3-2 (11-4, 6-11, 7-11, 11-8, 11-9), while Hee saw off Stanley Shilton 3-0 (11-7, 11-2, 11-7).

There were some notable results in the earlier knockout rounds, including Shilton staging a big comeback against Luke Davies-Stokes in the quarters to win 3-2 (8-11, 9-11, 11-7, 11-8, 11-2), the same stage at which Hee beat fourth seed Rhys Davies 3-1 (11-9, 11-7, 11-13, 11-7).

Kelly enjoyed a good victory in the last 16, seeing off No 2 seed and Cadet National Cup champion Naphong Boonyaprapa 3-1 (11-6, 12-10, 8-11, 11-8).

## Under-13 Girls



The Under-13 medallists with Table Tennis England National Coach Alan Cooke (picture by Ted Cottrell)

Delighted Mari Baldwin beat Scarlett O'Neil 3-0 (11-5, 11-4, 11-4) in the final to claim her first major title.

It was an emphatic victory for the Okehampton College student, who said: "I'm excited because it's my first national title.

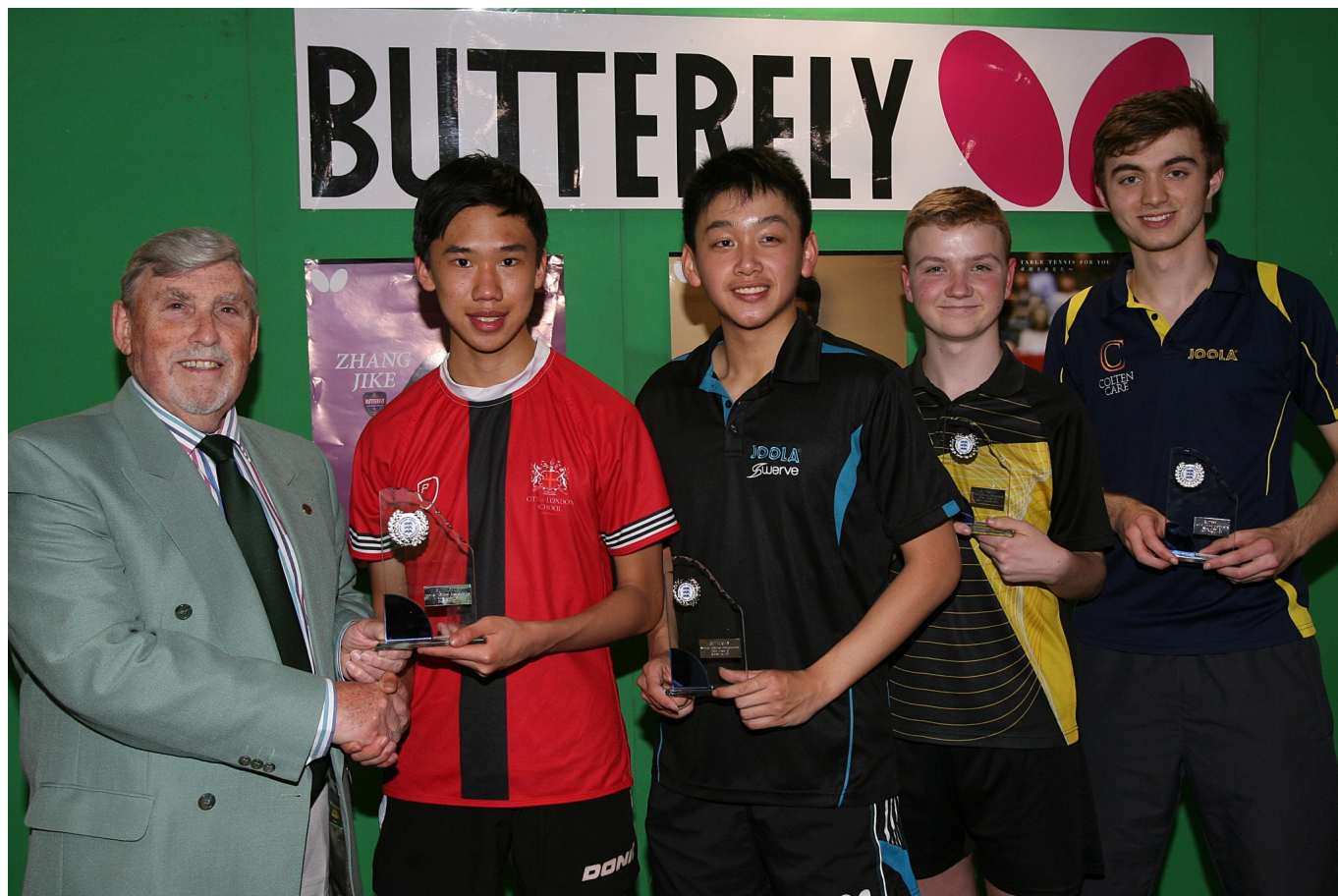
"My draw wasn't easy but I managed to strive through in the end."

Baldwin beat Ilyssa Lacorte 3-0 (11-7, 11-6, 11-8) in the semi-finals, while the other bronze medallist was Niamh Scarborough, defeated 3-1 (11-6, 9-11, 11-6, 11-6) by O'Neil.

Scarborough had booked her place in the semi-finals with a remarkable turnaround from the third game of her quarter-final against Lola McGhee, triumphing 3-2 (7-11, 9-11, 11-1, 12-10, 11-7).

## Under-16 Boys





The medallists with ESTTA Chairman John Blackband (picture by Ted Cottrell)

Joseph Hee matched the feat of his younger brother Benjamin thanks to a four-set victory over Sam Kwan in the final.

It was 6-11, 11-3, 11-9, 11-3 in favour of the London East player against his opponent from Cleveland.

The 14-year-old City of London School pupil said: "I feel really happy and proud to win because I was playing for East London and my school.

"It was a really tough competition and I'm happy to have pulled through to win."

Both semi-finals were decided in three straight, Hee overcoming Matthew Daish (11-7, 11-8, 11-9) and Kwan defeating Kian Burgess (12-10, 11-6, 11-8).

Burgess took the scalp of Naphat Boonyaprapa in the quarters, seeing match points pass him by before prevailing 3-2 (11-4, 11-8, 15-17, 9-11, 11-7).

## Under-16 Girls



The medallists with Welsh No 1 Ryan Jenkins (picture by Ted Cottrell)

Charlotte Bardsley won her first ESTTA title with a dominant display, beating top seed Gauri Duhan 3-0 (11-3, 11-4, 11-3) in the final.

"I'm happy," said Bardsley, who was representing Worcestershire. "I was second seed and I've lost to Gauri before, so it was good to beat her.

"I've not won this event before so it's good to add it to the list."

Bardsley did not drop a game in the earlier knockout rounds, culminating in defeating Bhavika Mistry 3-0 (11-4, 12-10, 11-8) in the last four.

The other semi-final was also done and dusted in three straight, Duhan overcoming Federica Bonato 11-9, 11-6, 11-7).

Bonato had earlier done well to take down group winners Sophie Barlow and Alice Dillon in the last 16 and quarter-finals respectively.

## Under-19 Boys





Josh Bennett in action (picture by Ted Cottrell)

The top two seeds met in the final as Josh Bennett took on James Hobson and it was the former, representing East Sussex, who won.

It went the distance as Bennett had to come from behind to defeat his West Yorkshire opponent 3-2 (9-11, 11-3, 9-11, 11-5, 11-5).

Bennett said: "It was difficult to pump myself up for the latter rounds after the groups, which were a bit easier, but in the final game I managed to find my best game and got the win.

"It's brilliant to be able to say you've won an individual national championships, so it's up there with anything else I've done."

In the semi-finals, it was a straightforward 3-0 (11-5, 11-4, 11-6) victory for Bennett over fourth seed James Chappell, while Hobson needed four to prevail against third-ranked George Hazell by an 11-9, 14-16, 11-6, 11-7 scoreline.

In the earlier rounds, the most notable match saw Cleveland's Nuradin Muktar win 13-11 in the decider against Jack Stockdale, having come from two games down.

## Under-19 Girls



Ryan Jenkins presents the Under-19 Girls' awards (picture by Ted Cottrell)

Kate Cheer finally got her hands on an ESTTA title after several near misses, beating Sarah Menghistab in the final.

It was a close match, with Cheer edging the first two sets and then turning up the power in the fourth after Menghistab had closed the deficit. The final scoreline was 13-11, 12-10, 9-11, 11-6 in the West Sussex girl's favour.

Cheer said she had recently rediscovered her training ethic after a couple of lean months and it had paid dividends.

She added: "I've come second or third so many times at under-11, under-13 and under-16 but I've never won, so it's really good to do that."

Menghistab, representing London West, had saved a match point in her semi-final against Letitia McMullan, which she won in five (9-11, 11-7, 10-12, 12-10, 11-8).

Cheer, meanwhile, came from a game down to see off Megan Dillon in four (11-13, 11-8, 11-7, 11-3).

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